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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [SP](#)  
SUBJECT: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION'S MAY 29 MEETING WITH  
SECRETARY GENERAL FOR DEFENSE POLICY CUESTA

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION HUGO LLORENS, REASONS 1.4(B)(D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Deputy Chief of Mission Llorens met May 29 with Spanish Secretary General for Defense Policy Luis Cuesta. They discussed bilateral relations, Afghanistan, NATO enlargement, AFRICOM, Cuesta's possible visit to Washington in June for meetings with DOD officials, a possible meeting for MOD Chacon with SECDEF, Gibraltar, and press reports of Guantanamo flights. End summary.

¶2. (C) The DCM noted the Secretary had a useful meeting with FM Moratinos May 19 in which they discussed a range of common interests. He commended the Spanish effort to reach out to the U.S. and maintain an intensive agenda of bilateral cooperation as we moved towards a transition in the U.S. in ¶2009. In that spirit, the DCM encouraged Cuesta to again look at the issue of sending more Spanish police to Afghanistan to serve as police trainers. He said the U.S. appreciated the Spanish effort to date, but every country involved needed to do more. Cuesta said it was still somewhat early in the new Zapatero administration to look at such an initiative. He noted the new MOD, Carme Chacon, was still getting settled in and would be out a few weeks on maternity leave. He suggested it would be better to wait before attempting to push forward on a new initiative. However, he noted that plans for Spain to train and equip an Afghan army company were moving forward. The funding had just been released to MOD, and they were ready to sign the MOU with the Afghans and a technical agreement with CSTC-A. Cuesta also mentioned that when the NATO SYG visited Spain in May, Moratinos had suggested getting Latin American countries involved in Afghanistan. To that end, Colombian military officials had just visited the Spanish PRT in Badghis province. Cuesta said General Craddock supported the initiative, and he thought the Colombians were genuinely interested. Cuesta also said Spain was looking seriously at offering additional flight hours using Spanish aircraft.

¶3. (C) The DCM raised NATO expansion, urging that Spain support MAP for Ukraine and Georgia. Cuesta expressed concern about the need for more democratic change in Ukraine and the formation of a popular consensus in favor of NATO membership. With respect to Georgia, he expressed concern about the dispute over Abkhazia. He noted there was still an OSCE mission in Georgia, hence it was an importer, not an exporter, of security. He said Spain thought the MAP issue deserved careful, objective, unhurried consideration. He noted countries such as Germany might prove a bigger obstacle than Spain. Nevertheless, he said Spain would not oppose MAP if a consensus for it developed.

14. (C) On AFRICOM, the DCM noted the June 9-11 visit of General Ward would be an important opportunity to exchange views on a subject of great strategic interest to both countries. Cuesta said he looked forward to meeting General Ward. The DCM encouraged Cuesta to accept the pending invitation to visit SOUTHCOM. Cuesta said he might be able to do so during while in the U.S. for the high level defense committee meeting in Annapolis near the end of June. He said he was seeking a meeting with U/S of Defense for Policy Edelman at that time (note: Embassy Madrid strongly recommends this appointment be granted). He also mentioned the possibility of seeing Deputy Secretary England. Cuesta added that new MOD Chacon (because of her maternity leave) would not be going to the June NATO meeting but would attend in September. He said the Spanish would probably seek an appointment for her with SECDEF at that time.

15. (C) On Gibraltar, Cuesta reiterated Spanish sensitivities about U.S. port visits (both warships and contract vessels such as fuel ships). He argued that Rota offered more than Gibraltar and should be our destination of choice. He suggested Spain would be disposed to consider modifications at Rota that would make it even more useful. The DCM pointed out that we are sensitive to Spanish concerns, did not wish to take sides in a Spain-UK dispute, and appreciated the use of Rota and other Spanish ports. However, we had operational reasons for visiting Gibraltar and in any case did not do so very often (5 times in 2006 versus 119 visits to Spanish ports). The DCM noted we were offering a DAO briefing for MFA personnel to help them better understand the operational aspects of this. Cuesta expressed concern about a rumor the U.S. was working on an agreement with the UK for maintenance

of Ohio-class submarines in Gibraltar. (Note: Embassy Madrid is unaware of such an agreement, but would appreciate any further information addressees can provide. End note).

16. (C) Regarding recent Spanish press reports on "CIA flights" to Guantanamo, Cuesta noted the MFA had issued a very effective press release May 28. The Spanish judge hearing a case relating to these flights was pushing for MOD and MFA to turn over information on U.S. military overflight requests, and the GOS was conducting a classification review.

Their strategy was to be as transparent as possible.  
Aguirre